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The Story Teller.

CIRCUS JACK

By Stanley Edwards Johnson

ONE morning long before the great shows took to the rails McAlpine's Combined Colossal Hippodrome and Consummation of Wonders was expected to pass through Trescott. The youngest generation of this village—that is to say, all that part of it that could move on two legs—had been anticipating this event for fully three weeks. The majority of the barns and sheds in the vicinity had proclaimed the allurements of spangled bareback riders, roaring lions, snarling tigers, daring contortionists and trapeze performers, elephants, monkeys and women who stood on tiptoes on the backs of swift horses and passed unscathed through hoops of fire.

All this had been seen and admired by Jacky Hopkins and Matilda Vinton, besides a score of others. Jacky was ten years old, and Matilda was four years his senior. According to the juvenile gossip of the village, they were "jest gone on each other."

The passing of the circus gave rise to picturesque ambitions in the young hearts of Trescott. The career of that patron saint of New Hampshire, Daniel Webster, faded into insignificance in comparison with the attainments of the heroines and heroes pictured in rainbow colors. Such youthful yearnings for fame are familiar to all who have not forgotten that they were once young and are generally of brief duration.

"I think, Jacky, my pa an' ma are meaner than the meanest, 'cause they won't let me go ter the circus termorrer," said Matilda, "but you can just bet I'm a-goin'."

Jacky's little blue eyes widened in surprise. Scarcely a day passed that Tilda's dynamic nature did not send thrills o wonder up and down his diminutive spine.

"Why, Tilda, you wouldn't run off down ter Woodbine all alone, would you?"

"Co'se I would, Jacky—that is, if I jest had the money ter get inter the circus with. An' I wanter jine it, too; I wanter jine the circus."

Little Jacky gasped in amazement. "You jine the circus, Tilda Vinton! You couldn't do nothin', Tilda. Why, what was you thinkin' o doin'?"

"Oh, I jest know I could! Jest let me git dressed up as them wimmin be an'—an' sleep in oil sheets, an' I jest bet I could do anything. You know, Jacky Hopkins, I can do lots o' things thet you can't. You couldn't git on the ridgepole o' pa's barn an' walk acrost it jest as if it was a tight rope. An' I've shinned up thet big pine back o' your house, an' you didn't git up but half way. An' I jumped forty feet from the upper hayloft in our barn down onter the hay, an' you didn't dast try. 'Tain't 'cause you ain't smart, only I'm made ter be in a circus."

She put her arm about the little fellow's waist, with all the superiority of her fourteen summers. Jacky was impressed. Visions of the wonderful exploits he had seen Tilda perform since the advent of the circus posters rose before him. There wasn't a boy in the village who could do what Tilda had done, and he was the only one who had frankly admired her, while the others had hidden their chagrin by calling her tomboy and other names which only delighted her with their unintentional flattery.

Now she had stimulated his boyish fancy, and he believed she was right. She was the greatest living wonder to him, and he longed to help her.

"Guess you'd do, Tilda, arter you'd been trained," Jacky admitted.

"An' it's real mean ter think thet I can't be what I was made ter be. How d'you s'pose anybody was ever able ter be anything onless their folks let 'em try?"

"I never thought o' goin' down ter Woodbine, an' I know my folks wouldn't let me. But, then, I couldn't do anything. Now, with you, Tilda, it's different. You can do things, an' your folks had orter let you."

"Well, I'm jest a-goin' ter, somehow; thet's all."

And so Tilda resolved to join the circus. The really unfortunate thing about Matilda was that she generally put through all she made up her juvenile mind to do, and, still worse, oftentimes she was equally firm in not doing what she did not want to.

Their delicious speculation on the future was interrupted by the imperative summons of Jacky's mother.

"There's your ma a-callin'," Matilda sneered. "She's allus coddlin' you. You'll never grow up if you don't git outern her way. Arter I've j'ined the circus I'll git a chance for you ter sell lemonade."

"Oh, good, Tilda! I'd do jest anything ter go with you! An' don't fergit ter be up by 4 o'clock termorrer so's ter see the circus go through."

It was a long time before Jacky went to sleep that night. He was haunted with the mingled desire to help his "girl" to fulfill her ambition and the temptation to contribute thereto by endowing her with all his worldly wealth, just $2.47, which he had made "plumin'."

Jacky had an account in the bank, and after the berry season each summer, when he had purchased a pair of shoes to wear in the winter to school, a necessity he dispensed with in the summer, he put the rest in the bank. He was allowed to keep the money in his possession, but once it got into the bank it was never allowed to come out. But this sum seemed great wealth to the little man. He wanted it to start Tilda on her life work, but somehow he could not quite justify his conscience to it.

Perhaps his dreams contributed in no small way to his final decision, for he saw his beloved Tilda performing all the various feats advertised in the great show. When he waked, he sprang out of bed with all his boyish eagerness to see the show go by. The cages were all closed and the wonders hidden from view, but it all seemed real.

Tilda was up before him. The great wagons had not begun to pass, and the stream of Trescott youth was wending its way toward the upper village by Cold Stream curve to meet the caravan.

They followed far behind, their arms encircling each other, absorbed in a discussion of Tilda's great future.

"I think you jest orter go, Tilda," Jacky declared, with solemn earnestness.

"Oh, I'm so glad, Jacky, thet you approve, for I shouldn't want ter do anything ag'in your wishes, but I'm jest goin' ter, somehow."

"Got any money?"

"Naw, I hain't, but I'll get it somehow."

"Take this." And Jacky shyly held out his hand, palm down.

"Why, Jacky Vinton!" exclaimed the delighted Tilda. "If you ain't the best feller thet ever lived! Now I'm fixed!"

"But you mustn't ever tell on me."

"No, Jacky, never. But what'll your ma do when she finds out? She keeps 'count o' all you earn, mean thing!"

"But she need not know till fall. By thet time, Tilda, you'll be great!" Jacky's eyes fairly glistened at the thought.

Tilda gazed at the massive vehicles with an air of proprietorship, and in a fit of venturesomeness she aroused the envy of those about her by patting the elephant's huge leg as if it were only her pet dog.

That afternoon Jacky stole quietly from the dinner table, having tasted hardly a morsel. The show was to begin at 2:30 o'clock, so Tilda had decided to make her escape directly after dinner. Jacky was to meet her about a mile down the road. Jacky's father had told him to remain at home that afternoon "ter rake after the cart."

Tilda and Jacky walked some time without saying much. The resourceful Matilda, who had never found her powers of conversation circumscribed before, suddenly found it a most difficult matter to utter a sentence. Jacky was so affected that he couldn't even look Tilda's way.

At last Jacky, in view of certain kinds of chastisements that he had received at various times during his life, broke the stillness.

"I've got ter go back, Tilda." Then he discovered a tear in Tilda's eyes and added, "Oh, Tilda, I wouldn't, arter all"—

"I will, too, Jacky Hopkins! I ain't one o' the kind thet goes back on myself any more'n I do on anybody else. But, oh, Jacky, you will be true, won't you?"

Now, there had never been any very definite conversation on matters concerning love between this erring pair. Accordingly Tilda's remark sounded grand and grown up, and he solemnly answered:

"Yes, I will, Tilda; hope ter die, I will!"

Then Tilda almost picked him off the ground and kissed him square on the lips. It was the first time that operation had been performed on Jacky except in kissing games. Its effect was to make him turn directly around and run as fast as his little legs could carry him, and the tears were running down his cheeks.

The sensation of that kiss was not even dulled by the chastisement which followed a few minutes later owing to his absence from the hayfield. Nor

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was it even forgotten, many years after, when Jacky became a man.

It was not very long before Jacky heard, with terrifying interest, the familiar voice of Matilda's mother.

"Tilda! Tilda! Where be you, Tilda?"

Then she came over into the field, for where Jacky was it was generally safe to conclude that Tilda might be discovered also. Her bony finger motioned Jacky toward her, and he came, trembling and fearful.

"Have you seen Tilda anywheres round here?" she asked.

"No'm," Jacky answered, with his tongue in his cheek. That question was an easy one to answer, but life was fast becoming very terrible to him.

Mrs. Vinton passed on. This was the beginning of an agitation which swept over the whole community in a grand crescendo until it occupied the attention of three adjoining townships. For two days Jacky kept out of sight as much as possible and passed his nights in sleeplessness and weeping. The pressure against his conscience was becoming harder and harder, while the difficulties of confession were growing greater.

He observed that if he had come forward with his information he might have maintained the peace of a hundred farms. As it was, the fields were deserted, and Jacky concluded that his reckoning would be something awful. Added to all this was an awful lonesome feeling which he rightly attributed to the absence of Tilda.

His little face was a picture of grief and escaped no one, but it was set down to the fact that he loved Tilda, or, as the neighbors put it: "Poor little Jacky! He did set great store by Tilda." So they forbore mentioning the girl in his presence.

But at last it came out. Mrs. Hopkins had taken to putting him to bed, "for the little man is that meachin'," she said. So after his prayers had been said he turned himself to the wall in an agony of tears and blurted out:

"Tilda's runned away ter the circus!"

Mrs. Hopkins comprehended it all in a minute. She did not wait to give Jacky his deserts and left him in a storm of tears, in which he sobbed himself to sleep.

It was hard for the little fellow to hold up his head during the next few days. "That Hopkins boy" became quite as much a part of the history of the town of Trescott as Tilda herself. The world looked very solemn to Jacky, but it was positively frightful when the truth became known to him.

It seemed that the circus had a novel way of escaping creditors, which involved an entire change of name at stated periods. This generally happened when it moved from one state to another. So McAlpine's Combined Colossal Hippodrome and Consummation of Wonders emerged when it crossed the Connecticut river into Vermont as Fontaine's Equine Aggregation and Grand Galaxy of Marvels.

The circus people said they had nothing whatever to do with McAlpine's show, which was true as far as their bills went, and they knew nothing of such a person as Tilda.

The months grew and the year ended. Jacky was growing taller and soberer. This sad episode in his life had left a deep impression, and then one by one the years were added, and all hope of ever knowing the fate of Tilda vanished from the hearts of Trescott, all except one.

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When the enraptured Tilda had feasted her heart on the wonderful feats of the bareback riders and trapeze performers, she was more convinced than ever that she was "made ter jine the circus." After the show was over she asked to see "the man thet bosses the show." The attendant smiled and humored her whim.

The manager was also in a contented state of mind and punctuated Tilda's enthusiastic account of her exploits with guffaws both loud and hearty.

"Waal, leetle gyrl," he said, with a perceptible southern accent, "Ah kinder reckon you would amaount ter suthin ef you's ter be given a chance. You seem purty peart. We'll try you—give you some trainin' an' plenty o' work ter do—but you kyant edzactly jine this ere show. We'll be a new combination when we git over the river, about forty miles in the interior. Now, you must remember you hain't anything ter do with McAlpine's Combination. Will you?"

Tilda was ready to do anything, and she soon found that she had to do everything. No one seemed to be able to find time to give her any training, but she did have something to eat and a place to sleep. Each night when she cried herself to sleep her last thought was of little Jacky.

The little prisoner of the caravan as the years rolled on found herself doing the things she had fondly dreamed of in her childish ambitions under a high sounding name, but sometimes in her sleeping dreams she saw the green hills and wandered over the fields with little Jacky, and always when she waked the tears would come to her eyes.

When Jacky became a man, he did what a great many enterprising New Englanders have been doing for four generations—he went west "'cause farmin' pays out there." But his heart told him that it was because he wanted to be where "that Hopkins boy" was never heard of.

He not only succeeded, but he also won a new sobriquet. He was known over more than seven states as "Circus Jack."

Yet he never revealed the real cause of his interest in the circus world, and the cowboys supposed it was his weakness.

Circus Jack had been known to go as far as 500 miles to see a circus, and at last he became known as the most generous patron of the trade, and the fraternity of the ring blessed him and wished there were more like him. In time he came to be the personal friend of many of the greatest artists and gained the reputation of knowing more about the inside of a circus than any man west of the Mississippi river.

It was also noted by those who occasionally went with him that his greatest interest was always in the gayly dressed women who rode the horses, jumped through the hoops and swung and leaped among the trapezes. He often sought their acquaintance and seemed to be very earnest when in conversation with them.

Twenty years had passed and were growing nearer to thirty. In the meantime "Mlle. Celestine, the world's equestrienne and trapezienne, the wonder and admiration of two continents," had passed her zenith, for the days of a circus rider, even when full of glory, are few.

The two greatest circuses in the country had bid high against each other to secure her services. In the midst of her exciting career she would occasionally long for her old life, but such yearning was only momentary.

Both unknown to herself and to Circus Jack the pair had many times been under the same canvas together, which was not surprising, for there was but little in Mlle. Celestine to suggest the whilom Matilda Vinton of Trescott.

But now Mlle. Celestine earned a small salary on the strength of her former fame. She could do only a few simple feats, and even in these she often came near disaster. What was to become of her in later years was a question.

The combination of which Mlle. Celestine was the chief attraction was wending its way across the Texas plains, where the cowboys went away disgusted that they had been faked by the show. Besides walking across the tent on a tight rope, Mlle. Celestine did none of those things which were accorded to her repertory in the advertisements. The ringmaster invariably announced that she was indisposed.

Circus Jack listened to the accounts of the inferiority of the show, but he made no exceptions and with a few of his friends was found on a certain August afternoon sweltering on one of the upper seats of the tent.

When the time came for Mlle. Celestine to appear, the heat had become almost intolerable. She stepped languidly into the ring and feebly acknowledged the applause. Then she turned to the ringmaster, holding out her hands appealingly, and was answered in an undertone roughly. She then grasped her wand and ascended the rope. It had already become evident that she was ill. Circus Jack, almost unobserved, had stepped down and was approaching the ring. He seemed to be seized with a sudden excitement. He went to the ringmaster and in a commanding manner said: "I want you to stop this. It is an outrage to let that woman go on. She's sick, man."

His words were greeted with applause. "It's Circus Jack!" the crowd shouted.

But the ringmaster was about to eject him forcibly from the place when Mlle. Celestine, turning to take her return journey on the rope, suddenly swayed. She seemed to have forgotten her position, and her gaze was fastened on the scene below. Then, fairly shrieking the words "Jacky Hopkins! Oh!" she fell fainting into the net.

Many years have passed since Tilda Vinton, formerly the celebrated Mlle. Celestine, returned to the old farm in Trescott as Mrs. Jacky Hopkins.

Another Jacky takes up the attention of that happy household, but as his adoring mother looks into his deep blue eyes her own grow misty with the pictures of other days, and she is thankful that some men are faithful to their childhood sweethearts.

Rights of Chinese Parents.

The law and custom of China still give the parents supreme control over their children. As far as it is possible for an outsider to get to know this people, whose "ways are dark," it does appear that this power of life and death is not often exercised unless in the case of infants. Now and again, however, instances occur which prove that this barbarous right is still claimed and exercised.

A man in the Nam Hoi district has just put his son to death in a most cruel fashion, and the law takes no cognizance of the murder, for surely it cannot be called by any other name. The boy had been often reproved for associating with gamblers and robbers, and his record was a bad one. This much may be said in extenuation of the father's diabolical act. For a long time the father was unable to lay hands on his son. This he succeeded in doing by offering a reward to any one who could bring him home. During the day of his return the father gave no evidence of his wicked designs. This put the lad off his guard. But when night came the father threw off his mask, seized his son, bound him hand and foot and then proceeded leisurely to strangle him.—China Mail.

The Nose Indicates Character.

A large nose is always an unfailing sign of a decided character. It belongs to the man of action, quick to see and to seize opportunity. A small nose indicates a passive nature, one less apt to act, although he may feel as deeply. He will have many theories, while the possessor of a large nose will have deeds to show. Persons with small noses are most loving and sympathizing, but their friendship is not the active kind.

A nose with the tip slightly tilted is the sign of the heartless flirt. A long nose shows dignity and repose, a short nose pugnacity and a love of gayety. An arched nose—one projecting at the bridge—shows thought. A straight nose shows an inclination toward serious subjects. A nose turning up slightly indicates eloquence, wit and imagination. If turned up much it shows egotism and love of luxury. A nose that slopes out directly from the forehead, that shows no indenting between the eyes, indicates power. If the nose is indented deeply at the root the subject will be weak and vacillating. A nose that turns down signifies that the possessor is miserly and sarcastic.—Ladies' Home Journal.

Close Quarters For Washington.

At the time, now some years ago, when subscriptions were being solicited for the erection of a statue in New York city to President Washington, says a contributor to Short Stories, a gentleman called to secure a contribution from an old resident, who, although wealthy, was a little "near."

On learning the object of the visit the rich man exclaimed:

"Washington! Washington! Why, Washington does not need a statue! I keep him enshrined in my heart!"

In vain were the visitor's solicitations, and he was naturally indignant at the parsimony of the millionaire.

"Well, Mr. R.," he remarked quietly as he rose to leave, "all I can say is that if the Father of His Country is in the position in which you describe him he is in a tight place!"

Miscellaneous Reading.

THE GREAT COAL STRIKE.

Mine Owners Think Their Rights Alone Are Entitled to Consideration.

The conference between President Roosevelt and representatives of the owners of, and laborers in, the anthracite coal mines of Pennsylvania, took place in the temporary White House in Washington last Friday. There were two conferences—one in the morning and the other in the afternoon—but there was no practical result other than to show that the mine owners are blind and unreasonable, and that the mine workers are willing to do what is right.

The conference was commenced in the morning. Those present were President Roosevelt, Attorney General Knox, Secretary Cortelyou, Carroll D. Wright, commissioner of labor; President Baer, of the Reading; Mr. Wilcox, of the Delaware and Hudson railroad, and Mr. Markle, representing the independent coal operators, and President Mitchell, of the Mine Workers' Union, with Thomas Duffey, T. D. Nichols and John Fahe, presidents of districts Nos. 7, 1 and 9, of the miners' union, being the districts where anthracite coal is mined. Later, Assistant Secretary Loeb and Mr. Barnes, who are stenoghaphers, came into the conference room.

The president opened the conference with the following statement to the mine owners and mine workers:

"I wish to call your attention to the fact that there are three parties affected by the situation in the anthracite trades—the operators, the miners and the general public. I speak for neither the operators nor the miners, but for the general public. The questions at issue which led to the trouble between the operators and the miners, and the situation itself, vitally affects the public. As long as there seemed to be a reasonable hope that these matters could be adjusted between them, it did not seem proper to me to intervene. I disclaim any right or duty to intervene in this way upon legal grounds or upon any ground other than on account of the nature of the catastrophe to a large portion of our people in the winter fuel famine, which is staring us in the face. I believe that my duty requires me to use whatever influence I personally can to bring to an end a situation which has become literally intolerable. I wish to emphasize the character of the situation and to say that its gravity is such that I am constrained urgently to insist that each one of you realize the heavy burden of responsibility upon you. We are upon the threshold of winter with an already existing coal famine, the future terrors of which we can hardly yet appreciate. The evil possibilities are so far reaching, so appalling, that it seems to me that you are not only justified in sinking, but required to sink, for the time, any tenacity as to your respective claims in the matter. It is my judgment that the situation requires that you open the common plane of the necessities of the public. With all the earnestness there is in me I ask that there be an immediate resumption of operations in the coal mines in some such way as will without any necessary delay meet the crying need of the people. I do not invite a discussion of your respective claims. I appeal to your patriotism, to the spirit that sinks personal considerations and makes individuals sacrifice for the general good."

In reply to this, President Mitchell, of the Mine-Workers Union, spoke as follows:

"Mr. President: I am much impressed with what you say. I am much impressed with the gravity of the situation. We feel that we are not responsible for this terrible state of affairs. We are willing to meet the gentlemen representing the coal operators to try to adjust our differences among ourselves. If we cannot adjust them that way, Mr. President, we are willing that you shall name a tribunal who shall determine the issues that have resulted in the strike, and if the gentlemen representing the operators will accept the award or decision of such a tribunal, the miners will willingly accept it, even if it is against their claims."

The representatives of the mine owners looked uneasy, and surprised, when President Mitchell concluded; but were not prepared with a reply. President Roosevelt relieved the situation by suggesting an adjournment of the conference until the afternoon, requesting that in the meantime the conferees give the situation full consideration, with a view of trying to reach an agreement later in the day.

After a conference among themselves and over the long distance telephone with people in New York, presumably J. P. Morgan, and probably others, the representatives of the mine owners agreed upon a course of action. It was that each would make a separate statement, and all would agree to decline President Mitchell's offer.

Upon the return of the conferees to the conference room, the mine owners took the position that they were the rightful owners of the anthracite mines; that because of dissatisfaction the union workers had struck; that as the owners had a right to do, they employed other miners; that the union men had interefrred with these miners, and had brought about a condition of riot, bloodshed and anarchy; that the constitution of Pennsylvania guaranteed the owners in the peaceful possession of their property; that troops were on the scene trying to uphold the constitution, and if they were unable to do so it was the duty of the president to send Federal troops to the scene; that Mr. Mitchell was not even a citizen of Pennsylvania, but of Illinois, and they were unwilling to recognize his right to interfere in matters that were none of his business; that the union miners were responsible for the murder and arson that had been committed, and if the president would do his duty he would restore order by force and leave the mine owners free to work their mines with such labor as they saw proper to employ. They were willing, however, to let the men go back to work on the old terms, and leave future differences to be settled by the civil court judges of districts in which the differences might develop.

President Mitchell denied that his union was responsible for any of the disaster that had existed in the coal fields, and put the responsibility on rowdy deputies employed by the mine owners. He concluded by submitting the following statement, signed by himself and colleagues:

"Mr. President: At the conference this morning, we, the accredited representatives of the anthracite coal mine workers, were much impressed with the views you expressed and the dangers to the welfare of our country from a prolongation of the coal strike that you so clearly pointed out. Conscious of the responsibility resting upon us, conscious of our duty to society, conscious of our obligations to the 150,000 mine workers whom we have the honor to represent, we have after most careful consideration and with the hope of relieving the situation and averting the sufferings and hardship which would inevitably follow in the wake of a coal famine, decided to propose a resumption of coal mining upon the lines hereinafter suggested.

"Before doing so, Mr. President, we desire to say we are not prompted to suggest this course because of any doubts of the justice of our claims. In deferring to your wishes, we are prompted by no fear on our part of our ability to continue the contest to a successful issue. Thanks to the generous assistance rendered us by our fellow-workers in this and other lands, thanks to a justice-loving American public, whose sympathies are always on the side of right, we are able to continue the struggle indefinitely. But, confident of our ability to demonstrate to any impartial tribunal the equity of our demands for higher wages and improved environment, we propose that the issues culminating in the strike shall be referred to you and a tribunal of your own selection, and agree to accept your award upon all, or any of the questions involved.

"If you will accept this responsibility, and the representatives of the coal operators will signify their willingness to have your decision incorporated in an agreement, for not less than one year, or more than five years, as may be determined between themselves and the anthracite coal mine workers, and will pay the scale of wages which you and the tribunal appointed by you shall award, we will immediately call a convention and recommend a resumption of work, upon the understanding that the wages which shall be paid are to go into effect from the day upon which work is resumed."

The mine owners had nothing further to say, and the conference adjourned, both sides leaving with the understanding that the fight so far as they are concerned, is to continue to a finish.

THE PANAMA CANAL.

It Will Probably Cost a Billion Before Completion.

At present the idea is to build a canal with locks, but I have no idea that this will ever be done. A sea-level canal is the only one that will finally be feasible. The tide at Panama is 18 feet; the tide at Colon is 18 inches. When our engineers get down into the Culebra cut they will, doubtless, very reasonably, report that the locks and gates are great impediments. People here look upon a sea-level canal as a foregone conclusion. By sinking the Culebra 188 feet more than the present surveys all for this result can be obtained. That means $50,000,000 at one clip. Before we have mastered the problems of health, rain, wind and tide, mountain cutting and level dredging, his isthmian ditch will probably cost a billion dollars.

The Colombian government is another question. I had several long conversations with Dr. Mutis-Durrand, the finest product of Colombian civilization, an able jurist and formerly governor of the province of Panama. He opines that all parties in Columbia favor the canal, and favor giving America all reasonable concessions. But even this splendid, broad-gauge Colombian statesman hesitates about passing over to us the jurisdiction of Panama and Colon. Panama city is a Spanish community of 25,000 inhabitants—very charming in situation and romantic history; but just as unsanitary as can be. As my genial friend, Captain Beers, of the Panama railroad, expressed it. "Between the heavy rains and the buzzards, the streets of Panama are as clean as a whistle."

These, then, are approximately some of the difficulties involved in the construction of the canal. 1. Immense problems in sanitation. 2. Great difficulties of climate to be overcome. 3. Critical diplomatic relations with the Colombian government, which can only be overcome with great patience and toleration. 4. The inevitable increase of expenses above the original estimates of cost. The most careful financial observers assure me that the cost of this undertaking, with the expense attached to its operation, will be to our government about $12,000,000 a year, while the tariffs resulting from the world's trade will, on the same estimate, give us only $7,000,000 thus leaving a deficit of $5,000,000 a year—Peter MacQueen in Lesslie's Weekly.

Car Famine In the South.

With the regularity of the fall and winter seasons comes a car famine in the south that sadly limits business, and production, and even consumption. It cripples and mars the best part of the business year. Its coming is as certain as the season of the year itself, and yet no plan is devised to prevent it, or even to lessen it.

Coke is sold in Knoxville at $10 a ton in carload lots, not because there is any great or unusual scarcity of coke, but because cars cannot be procured to haul it in. Mills are embarrassed in every part of the south by the want of available cars, and some will even be stopped by this dearth in transportation facilities.

The subject is a broad one that deserves careful attention, not only on the part of the railroad companies, but also on the part of merchants and manufacturers. If the failure were but for a day or even for a month not so much thought would be given to it, but all who know say it will last until December at least, and it may be prolonged to March. Such a lengthy famine simply means a check to prosperity and growth.

The car service conditions of the south need revision. In the north there is some congestion on account of a want of sufficient terminal facilities, business having outgrown the latter, but as a rule there is no direct car famine on northern roads. This is a trouble largely confined to the south, and the railroads cannot afford longer to permit such a condition to come each year, thus crippling at least the goose that lays the golden egg.

If the car companies cannot fill orders, then let there be established more car-making plants. More cars are needed, and there is certainly a way to procure them before another busy season is at hand.—Birmingham Age-Herald.

TRIBULATIONS OF MR. BRYAN.

How the Types Made Him Say What He Did Not Mean.

Editor Bryan is having trouble with his types, and we tender him our entire sympathy. The suffering of editors would fill a volume as large as "Fox's Book of Martyrs," and the worst part about it is that most people regard these sufferings from a humorous standpoint. We remember that once upon a time the gifted Watterson wrote a Christmas editorial, while the Hess English Opera company was giving a series of operas in Louisville, the most popular of which was "The Chimes of Normandy," then something of a novelty. The editor's head was filled with airs from Arcady and chimes from Normandy, and he wove many an apt musical line into his Christmas revery. But the little demons that haunt the cases of type were very active that night, and so Watterson's playful allusions were made to the Hoss English Opera company instead of the Hess, and that line from 'The Chimes" beginning "Tink-a-tink-a-ding-dong" loomed up the next morning to the editor's horror as "Take a drink of ding-dong."

But the editor of the old Memphis Ledger, had an encounter with the types, which has become historic. He undertook to write a complimentary paragraph about a famous military chieftain, whom he alluded to as "a battle-scarred veteran." The hero, however, appeared in type as "a bottle-scarred veteran." Naturally this provoked his ire and he sought a correction from the paper's editor, who gladly gave it. But once more perverse fate was at work, and the military celebrity was mentioned as "a battle-scared veteran." Doubtless that editor's feeling were not unlike those of another who paid an eloquent tribute to a "noble old burgher," who in cold type, however, impersonated the role of "a nobby old burglar."

But Mr. Bryan shall now be heard. Subscribers of his paper, The Commoner, are in receipt of a personal letter from him, calling attention to a typographical error in a recent issue which has caused him no end of worry; though as usual there are people depraved enough to see nothing but the comic side of the incident. Mr. Bryan writes: "I have just learned that a typographical error was made in some of the recent letters which we were sending out regarding the importance of extending the circulation of The Commoner for the purpose of counteracting the work being done by the monopoly element of the Democratic party. The stenographer, by omitting one line of the letter, caused it to read: 'It is my intention to discuss through The Commoner, from a Democratic standpoint, all questions of public importance, and to use the Democratic party for mercenary purposes.' The sentence should have read: 'It is my intention to discuss through The Commoner, from a Democratic standpoint, all questions of public importance, and to use the paper's influence to thwart the plans of those who would use the Democratic party for mercenary purposes.'"

An apparently frank confession, that he intended "to use the Democratic party for mercenary purposes" was enough to make the editor's blood run cold; but it appears that he was writing about other people who wanted to do this thing. Happily all's well that ends well; but Editor Bryan has our sincere condolences—Exchange.

CONDITION OF COTTON.

Detailed Statement by States of Comparative Averages.

The monthly report of the agricultural department issued last Friday, shows the average condition of cotton on September 25, to have been 58.3, as compared with 64 on August 26; 61.4 on September 25, 1901; 67 on October 1, 1900, and a ten-year average of 68.9 The following table shows in the first, second, third and fourth columns respectively by states, the averages of conditions September 25, the corresponding averages one month ago, the corresponding averages a year ago, and the mean of the corresponding averages for the last ten years:

Virginia,	73	80	73	76
North Carolina,	68	80	63	70
South Carolina,	68	74	67	68
Georgia,	62	67	67	62
Florida,	68	75	65	72
Alabama,	52	54	65	71
Mississippi,	63	68	66	69
Louisiana,	64	70	72	70
Texas,	47	52	52	67
Arkansas,	68	75	51	67
Tennessee,	76	82	60	70
Missouri	73	73	67	72
Oklahoma,	61	76	71	—
Indian Territory,	61	68	68	—

While the decline during September ranges all the way from 2 points in Alabama to 12 points in North Carolina and 21 in Oklahoma, only one state, Missouri, fails to report some deterioration.

The low estimate of the condition in Texas is fully sustained by a large amount of collateral and independent testimony in the possession of the department, for which it is indebted to officials of railroads and oil mills and to other persons whose occupations give them special facilities for making a trustworthy estimate of the situation.

RURAL LETTER BOXES.—First Assistant Postmaster General Wayne has issued a circular letter to the postmasters of all rural free delivery postoffices, instructing them that postmasters and rural free delivery carriers are not permitted to condemn the letter boxes used by patrons. The order directs that they shall continue to serve boxes already erected until a regular inspection of such boxes can be made by the route inspectors and special agents, who will condemn the boxes found unsafe or which otherwise fail to meet the requirements. The entire force of rural free delivery inspectors is now investigating petitions for such service, and these box inspections can not be made for a month or two.

There will be 14,000 rural free delivery postal routes in operation on July 1 next, and the estimate for appropriations for the next fiscal year provides for 12,000 more.